

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT SW

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF ELECTION OUTCOME

REF: STOCKHOLM 3289

SUMMARY: PALME HOLDS INITIATIVE NOW EVEN IF ELECTION
ENDS UP AT EVEN SPLIT OF RIKSDAG SEATS, AND HE WILL
ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO GOVERN. REAL WINNERS WERE
CENTER PARTY AND LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK), THE LATTER
REMAINING SMALLEST PARTY BUT, IN STRATEGIC POSITION.
BIG LOSER WAS LIBERAL PARTY. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS CAME UP
FAST JUST BEFORE ELECTION BUT PALME HAS SUFFERED LOSSES
AT BOTH WINGS OF HIS PARTY SINCE LAST ELECTION AND MUST
NOW DECIDE HOW TO STEM THIS EROSION. IT IS TOO EARLY TO
SEE WHAT DIRECTION HE WILL GO, BUT THERE WILL PROBABLY
BE LITTLE CHANGE IN CONTENT OR STYLE OF HIS FOREIGN
POLICY. END SUMMARY.

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1. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SOCIALIST BLOC SQUEAKS THROUGH

WITH A TWO-SEAT EDGE IN NEW RIKSDAG OR SLIPS INTO 175-175 DEADLOCK WITH BOURGEOIS CAMP, CERTAIN CONCLUSIONS EMERGE FROM VOTING PATTERN IN 1973 SWEDISH ELECTIONS. AS INDICATED IN REFTTEL, PRIMIN PALME WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO HEAD SWEDISH GOVERNMENT IN THE SHORT RUN, EITHER AS HEAD OF A ONE-PARTY MINORITY GOVERNMENT DEPENDENT UPON COMMUNIST SUFFERANCE OR AS HEAD OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC COALITION WITH A SMALLER "MIDDLE" PARTY-- LIBERAL OR CENTER. PALME, NOT THE BOURGEOIS PARTIES, WILL HOD THE INITIATIVE. INTERVIEWED TODAY ON TV AND RADIO, PALME REFUSED INDICATE HOW HE WILL PROCEED UNTIL FINAL OFFICIAL RETURNS ARE IN.

2. TO LOOK BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION, THE REAL WINNERS OF THIS ELECTION ARE THE CENTER PARTY AND THE LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK). THE ONE BIG LOSER IS THE LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH LOST NEARLY HALF OF ITS POPULAR SUPPORT. MODERATE COALITION PARTY IS A SMALL WINNER BUT SATISFIED NEVERTHELESS. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS ALSO A SMALL LOSER BUT UNHAPPY.

3. VPK GARNERED ONLY ABOUT 5.3 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE AND REAISED PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION ONLY TWO SEATS FROM 17 TO 19. BUT THERE WAS JUBILATION IN VPK HEADQUARTERS LAST NIGHT. VPK STRENGTHENED ITS POSITION AS INDISPENSABLE SILENT PARTNER OF SOCDEM GOVERNMENT. ITS RISE FROM 4.8 TO 5.3 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE APPEARS TO REFLECT CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS WITH BIG-CITY YOUTH VOTE. ORTHODOX, MOSCOW-ORIENTED, IT HAD NO TROUBLE BEATING BACK MAOIST CHALLENGE AND IS A SMALL BUT LIVELY POLITICAL FORCE IN SWEDEN.

4. LIBERAL PARTY WAS BADLY CHEWED UP BY ITS OWN BOURGEOIS BLOC PARTNERS--MODERATES AND CENTER. LIBERAL LEADER HELEN SAID PARTY SPENT ITS ENERGIES STRIVING FOR A BOURGEOIS-BLOC VICTORY AND NEGLECTED ITS OWN INTEREST UNSELFISHLY. THIS IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT LIBERAL PARTY HAS NOT STOOD FOR MUCH OF ANYTHING IN THIS CAMPAIGN AND THIS PLUS A LOSER IMAGE SIMPLY TURNED OFF MANY TRADITIONAL LIBERAL VOTERS. LIBERAL PARTY WILL HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO REVIEW ITS LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAMS AFTER THIS MAJOR DEFEAT.

5. SOCDEM PARTY MADE A VERY STRONGSTRETCH RUN AND NEARLY MADE GOOD ITS LOSSES IN PUBLIC ESTEEM SUFFERED DURING 1970-72 RECESSION AND ACCESSORY PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND STAGNATION. NEVERTHELESS, PALME GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE WEAKER BASE IN NEW RIKSDAG THAN IT HAS

NOW AND, AS PALME ADMITTED PRIVATELY TO PRESS LAST NIGHT, HE WILL FIND IT HARDER TO GET HIS MEASURES TURNED INTO LAW OR PUBLIC POLICY. PALME WILL HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY OF DEALING WITH THE FACT THAT HIS PARTY'S LOSSES WERE BOTH TO THE LEFT (VPK) AND TO THE RIGHT (CENTER). ADVISERS IN HIS DIVIDED PARTY WILL BE PULLING HIM IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

6. IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT HOW HE WILL READ THE RESULTS IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC POLICY--FORWARD TO THE BUILDING OF A MORE PERFECT SOCIALISM OR HUNKER DOWN AND SEE IF HE CAN RESOLVE SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S SPECIFIC IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS SUCH AS UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION. IT IS MORE PREDICTABLE, HOWEVER, THAT PALME'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY WILL BE NO LESS IDEOLOGICAL AND VOCAL IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT THIS IS A CHEAP WAY POLITICALLY OF KEEPING HIS RESTIVE LEFT WING QUIET, IF NOT CONTENT.
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